

Mr. Ford's Page

THREE years ago the United States declared war on Germany and gave a two-fold moral justification for so doing: the war was to make the world safe for democracy; it was also a war waged against further wars. It is a timely and pertinent question whether we succeeded in reaching either of those objectives. There is nothing to be gained in halting our thought at the statement that we won the military contest, neither is there anything to be gained by rehearsing the fact that our military opponents failed of their purpose. We have lived long enough to see the emptiness of this kind of comfort, because it is apparent to

all that war is a loss both to victor and vanquished. We won the war, but did we win what we set out to win through this war?

If we begin at the beginning we find ourselves completely outside the atmosphere of battles and marches and victories and retreats; we find ourselves back in the days when the people of the earth went to their work every day, not one of them planning or desiring to go out and slaughter their neighbors. We find ourselves, indeed, in the prosperous and productive ten years which preceded 1914. What force existed in the world in those days, that made the war become possible and actual in the days that followed?

Now, there was some force existing then—do not for one moment doubt that!

It was not a self-advertising force, but hidden. It kept itself in the dark and manipulated certain instincts and passions with a skill which could only emanate from Satan himself. What was that force?

Some people will answer, "the militarists." Well, the militarists were the human instruments, but were they the originating force? A militarist makes himself rather conspicuous; he is trained for war and naturally is not averse to a trial of his theories in actual contest. No true soldier is content with a life on the parade-ground any more than a true hunter is content with a life indoors. The "militarists," in uniform and out of uniform, have a heavy weight of responsibility to bear for the war, but the war did not begin with them; it began further back.

Nor can we say that it began with the governments. Governments, after all, are only groups of very fallible human beings. You can put the whole Government of the United States into one building. As a rule, governments are not composed of supermen. The governments are at the mercy of each other. They seldom originate, they merely meet with counter-strokes what is put up to them by other governments. But who influences governments to act in the first place? Whence comes the first insinuation of disruptive policy? In answering this question, some prefer to lay the blame on the whole people. They are perhaps blamable for allowing themselves to be inspired to false courses and for permitting their rulers to use their strength and wealth for bad ends; but certainly no one will say that the people themselves originate war? The very passions which prepare a people to go out to war are worked into them from above—by a prejudiced and browbeaten press, by representations of their government which has been worked into a fever of suspicion and fear. The people have neither the time nor the inclination to hate each other. All this is worked into them, and the source of the influence is outside and above them. What is it?

WHATEVER the force is that makes war, this much is certain: No inquiry has yet been undertaken by the governments to discover and determine what it is. What Germans know is this: the hidden force was active in the German war office. What Frenchmen know is this: the hidden force was at work in the French ministry of war. What Britishers know is this: the dark influence also had access to Whitehall. Perhaps it had less access to the war department of the United States than of any other

country—BUT—it is stronger there now than it was at any time before or during the war!

There is not the slightest indication that the forces which formed the mysterious roots of the war have been uncovered or defeated. There is every indication that, elated by their achievement in throwing the world into vast confusion which will allow them to reach in and gain larger control of wealth and power, they are now more active and more confident than ever before?

Who, previous to 1914, ever talked of "the next war"? Everyone was talking about the impossibility of war. Trade and education and travel and a better understanding had made war impossible, everybody said. But nowadays "the next war" is the commonest of phrases; militarists openly advise preparing for it; publicists openly announce its certain coming; and the people are bewildered. They ask themselves, "Who or what is it that decrees that we shall kill each other every little while? Who or what is it that forces our government to think of war, and build for war, and tax for war, and train for war, and study for war, and take registration for war, as if War were the main business of Government?" We may take it for granted that the forces which make war are the same forces which in every country are

holding back every movement which would make for the uncovering of the deep-seated, hidden promoters of war as a business.

THERE is no dispute as to who won the war; the question is, did we win what we set out to win by the war? Have we started an investigation of the true causes of the war—and why haven't we? After we have blamed the militarists, the governments and the people for all that is justly their fault, there still remains a hidden force which dominates all three—has it been uncovered yet? It has not! The influences which cause war are not national nor racial; they are international, and their object is power and wealth. The war is loss to everyone but them, no matter who wins the military part of it. Who are they?

AN IMPARTIAL investigation of the last war, of what preceded it and what has come out of it, would show beyond a doubt that there is in the world a human group with vast powers of control that prefers to remain unknown, that does not seek office nor any of the tokens of power, that belongs to no nation whatever but is international—a force that uses every government, every widespread business organization, every agency of publicity, every resource of national psychology, to throw the world into a panic for the sake of getting still more power over the world.

An old gambling trick used to be for the gambler to cry "Police!" when a lot of money was on the table, and, in the panic which followed, seize the money and run off with it. There is a power within the world which cries "War!" and in the confusion of nations, the unrestrained sacrifice which people make for peace and safety, runs off with the spoils of the panic.

The point to keep in mind is that, though we won the military contest, the world has not yet quite succeeded in winning a complete victory over the promoters of war and their instruments in politics, finance and militarism.

You cannot defeat those dark forces by war—because war is their game. The last war could not defeat them, for the war itself was the sign that they had gained their point. Their point was the war. Bringing it about was their object. Having it at all was their success. War is never a calamity to those who play the nations like chessmen, one against the other.

No. Peace is the defeat of the dark powers. Exposure by peaceful methods is their defeat. Prosperity which is shared by the producers of prosperity—that helps to defeat them too.

The governments have had the opportunity to expose the real roots of war, and have not done it. The Dark Forces themselves have fought to keep the United States out of the League of Nations, because if the United States lived up to its principles it would demand an exposure of the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

These forces fear nothing so much as the light of the naked truth. That is why they have such a heavy hand on all the molders of public opinion. The truth, not war, is the only thing they fear. They can turn war to their advantage; they cannot turn the truth; it condemns them.

Every true man ought to go back to our moral purpose in the war, namely, to destroy war. War can be destroyed by the truth about its sources.